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T. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY  
COLCHESTER

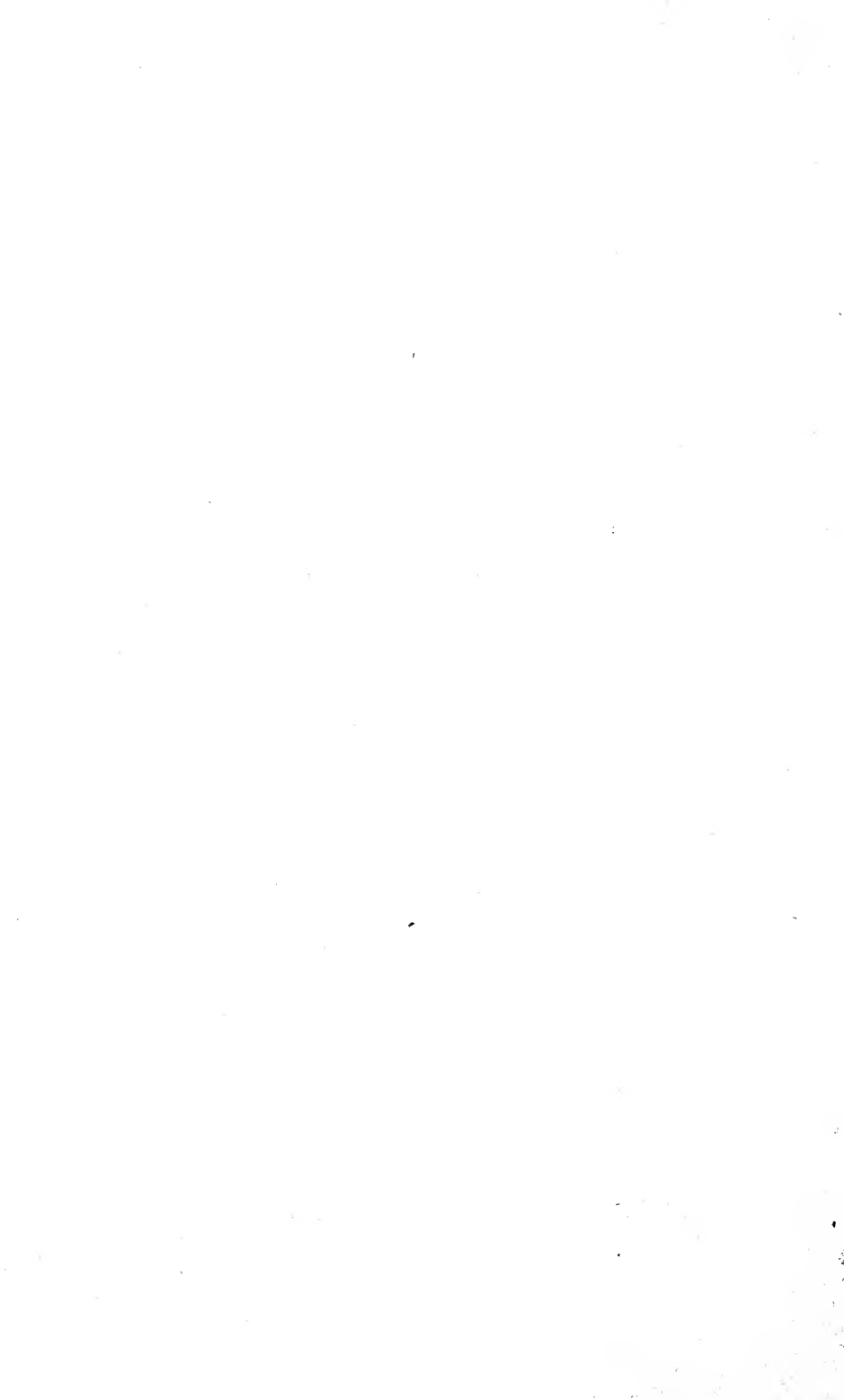
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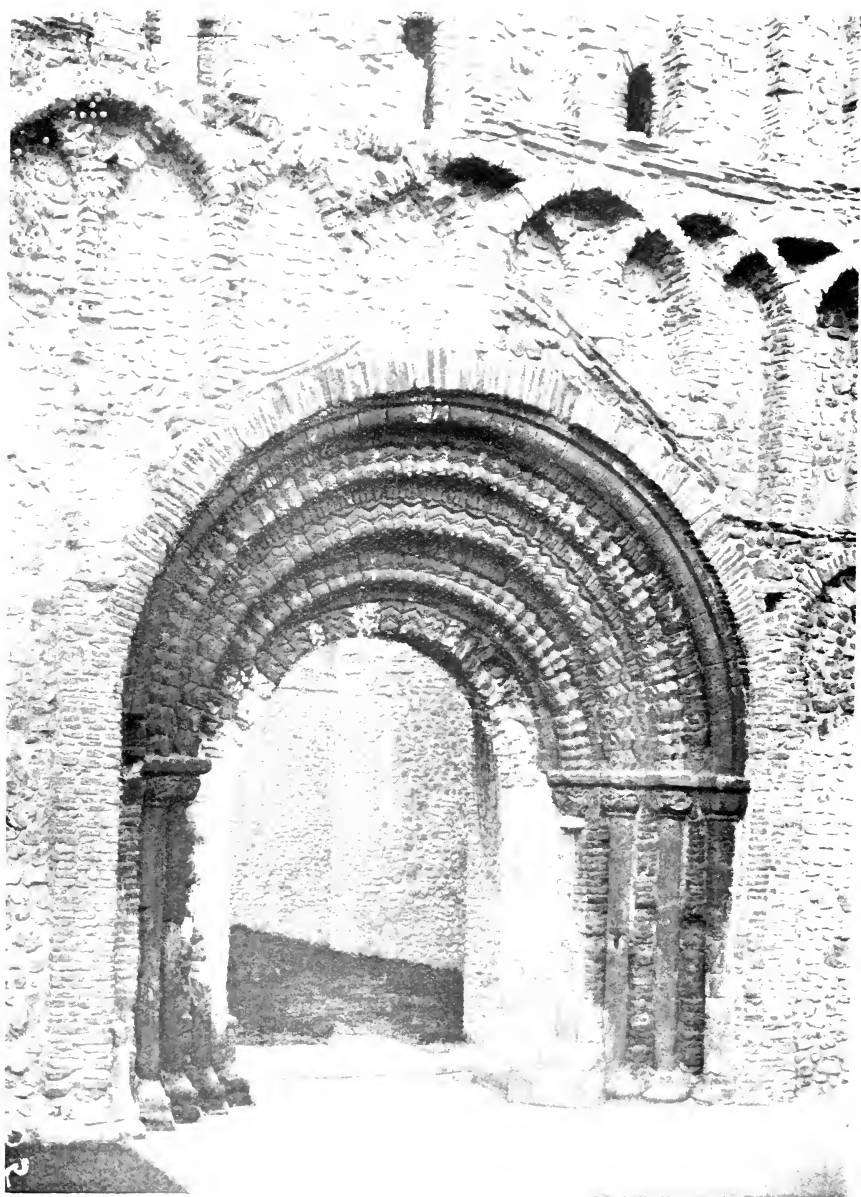


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WEST DOORWAY OF NAVE

# ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY COLCHESTER

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# ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY

## COLCHESTER

### THE AUGUSTINIAN RULE

**A**UGUSTINIAN • CANONS REGULAR followed the Rule of St. Augustine of Hippo. A text of this Rule may be found in the Benedictine edition of the works of St. Augustine, printed in Paris, 1836, together with a letter written by the Saint to a Society of devout women, from which the Rule was afterwards adapted for men.

The Rule deals with general principles, and it must have been necessary from an early stage of the history of the Order to supplement it by a set of more detailed directions. These were known as Observances, and became practically part of the Rule, although varying slightly in different houses. Several Observances have come down to us, notably those of the Abbey of St. Victor at Paris, and of St. Denis at Reims. Of English houses the Observances of Barnwell Priory near Cambridge have been printed by the late J. W. Clark of Cambridge, and are of particular interest here, as that house was "confederate" with the Priors of Colchester and Huntingdon.

The Rule was divided into seven chapters, one of which was read each morning in the Chapter-house, so that the whole Rule was read through each week. It was from the daily reading of this Chapter that the Chapter-house took its name. The brethren are exhorted to live at peace with each other, forgetting what their social position had been in the world; to keep the appointed hours of prayer scrupulously; to fast as much as is consistent with good health, and not to envy those who are too weakly to endure austerities, "for it is better to want less than to have more." No brother is to go outside the bounds of the house alone, but must have a companion, and is to be careful to have nothing to do with women, though he is not forbidden to look at them. Brethren are to admonish each other about

such faults, and even to report them to the convent. No one is to receive letters or gifts. All clothes are to be kept in one place, and if any one receives clothes belonging to another he is not to complain, as everything is to be in common. Clothes are only to be washed as the superior decides, and baths are to be allowed in case of need. On the other hand when a bath is ordered it is to be taken without grumbling. When a brother says that he is in pain he is to be believed, but for his treatment a physician is to be consulted. Books are only to be given out at a particular hour, but garments and shoes when they are needed. There are to be no quarrels; but if they occur they must be ended at once, forgiveness being granted and amends made. The head of the house is to be obeyed as a father, and is himself to be a pattern of good works, not considering himself fortunate in power that governs, but in charity that obeys. Let him be more anxious to be loved than feared, so that the brethren may feel compassion not only for themselves but for him, "for the loftier his station the greater his danger."

The actual details of the everyday life of the canons, with the duties and responsibilities of the officers, or Obedientiaries, are set forth in the Observances. The matter on which everything turned was the round of Services in Church, the *Opus Dei*, to which all else was subordinate. There were seven services, distributed over the twenty-four hours of a day and night. The monastic day, it must be remembered, though always divided into twelve hours, varied in length according to the season, as it began at sunrise and ended at sunset: an hour in the summer was therefore much longer than an hour in the winter. At midnight the convent rose and went to the church for Mattins and Lauds, which was considered as one service, after which they returned to their dormitory, or dorter as it was called, and slept till sunrise, when they returned to church for Prime, followed by the morning Mass, with private Masses and Confessions. All then went to the Chapter-house, where the private affairs of the house were discussed, everything connected with discipline and organization, spiritual or temporal, dealt with, all elections to office held, and all letters read and external business transacted. When Chapter was over, work of various descriptions followed, till it was time for the next service, Terce. This round, from Prime to Terce, took up the first three "hours" of the day. After Terce came High Mass, followed immediately by Sext. While dinner was preparing, the brethren read in the cloister, and at midday came dinner, completing the second three "hours." After dinner all went to take the midday rest in

the dorter, till the bell rang for None, the next service. This ended the third three "hours." After None the brethren went to the frater for a drink, returning to work until Evensong. Then followed supper, the brethren reading in the cloister afterwards, while the servants had their meal, until the bell rang for Collation, which was held in the Chapter-house. It consisted of reading aloud from some book for a short space of time, after which on fast days beer was served in the frater, this taking the place of the drinking after None. The last service of the day, Compline, followed, and then the brethren went in order to the dorter to sleep till they were roused at midnight for Mattins. The latest hour for going to bed, which would naturally be in the summer, must have been nine o'clock or soon after.

The Observances are full of directions and regulations about the precise manner in which everything is to be done, how everyone is to behave in the Church, the Chapter-house, the Dorter, and the Frater; when they may speak and when they must be silent. Great care was taken in the admission of novices, and in their training. Their birth, circumstances, moral and physical qualities, and health were closely enquired into before they were received, and when accepted they remained for a year on probation, to prove whether the novice seemed suitable in the opinion of the convent, and whether for his own part he felt capable of supporting the strictness of conventual life. He would have found out for himself that existence in the cloister was dull, the round of services endless, the long silences irksome, the hours of rest short. Nothing but a real sense that he had chosen the right vocation would decide him to endure such conditions indefinitely. In the meanwhile he had been instructed by the Master of the Novices in all manner of minute details of behaviour; how he should arrange his habit when standing, and how when sitting; how he ought to bow so that his hands when crossed should reach to his knees, and how in bowing he might make the sign of the cross with his habit. For everything throughout the day, whether in Church, Chapter-house, Cloister, Frater, or Dorter, he had to learn the appropriate actions and gestures; the Rule was with him at every turn, however trivial the occasion. At the end of the year of probation, if all was satisfactory, the novice took the monastic vows, making his profession, as it was called, in a prescribed form, which was written on a piece of parchment and laid on the high altar by the novice himself. After profession he still remained under the charge of the Master of the Novices as long as the Prior thought fit, but at the end of this time he became

a full member of the convent, taking his place in everything which went on, and being promoted to Holy Orders as soon as possible, in order to take his share in the masses which formed part of the daily round.

The administration of the house entailed on the brethren a number of different duties, and the responsibility for their proper performance was divided up among them by the creation of a number of offices, the holders of which were called Obedientiaries. The number of such offices varied with the size of the house, but those at Barnwell Priory near Cambridge, a larger house than St. Botolph's, were as follows.

At the head of the house was the Prior, with his deputies the Sub-prior and Third Prior; the Precentor had charge of the services in church and of all books, being also the Librarian, and had as his assistant the Succentor; the Sacrist, with his assistant the Sub-sacrist, had charge of the church and its contents, and the provision of everything necessary for its upkeep. The Sub-sacrist was specially deputed to be the timekeeper and bell-ringer, and to interview casual visitors. The constant supervision required from the Sacrist and Sub-sacrist may be realized from the fact that they not only took their meals in the church, but also slept in it. The Cellarer, in addition to the general supervision of the food and drink, acted as the Steward or Bursar, being jointly responsible with the Prior for the management of the estates and possessions of the house. He also had charge of the lay brothers. The Grainger, who took charge of the produce of the estates, and the Receiver, who accounted for the money, worked in close connection with the Cellarer. The Sub-cellarer had care of the oven and beer-cellar, and also of the guest house. The Fraterer had to see that the frater was sufficiently supplied with food and drink and all necessities, and the Kitchenier was equally responsible for the kitchen, keeping the accounts, and having a cook and a caterer under his orders. The Chamberlain looked after the making and washing of the clothes of the brethren, and provided warm water and soap for shaving and for baths. The Hosteller entertained all the guests of the monastery, and the Infirmerer had charge of the Farmery or Infirmary and those who lived in it, whether temporarily or permanently. The Almoner fulfilled the same functions in the Almonry, and also dispensed the charity of the house in the matter of outdoor relief.

In addition to the fully-professed brethren, the Canons regular, there were lay brethren, or *Conversi*, men usually of the craftsman class, and of course not in holy orders. They

took the monastic vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, and exercised their different trades in the service of the house, being under the general supervision of the Cellarer. They took part in the services in church, though not to the same extent as the Canons, and to some degree shared the common life, though regarded as of an inferior class.

The dress of an Augustinian Canon consisted of a black cassock, which was a long fur-lined gown reaching to the feet, and over this a white rochet, a linen garment not quite so long as the cassock, and having tight sleeves; it was bound at the waist with a girdle. Over this was the cope of black cloth with a hood, also known as the habit, fur-lined for winter use, and of coarse woollen cloth for summer. Canons were also allowed to wear for the sake of warmth an amess or short cape of gray fur, which was thrown over the shoulders and had two long pendants hanging down in front. When travelling, they were also allowed gloves or mittens.

## HISTORY OF ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY

THE Priory of St. Julian and St. Botolph, Colchester, was founded between 1093 and 1100 under the following circumstances. Before this date there existed here a church of St. Botolph, doubtless from its dedication of Saxon origin, served by a small company of priests. Such a small community might in Saxon times be known as a minster, though its inmates were "secular" priests, belonging to no monastic order. In 1093 one Ainulf was the head of this community in the church of St. Botolph, and to him there came a Kentishman called Norman, who having studied in France at the monastery of Bec in Normandy under Anselm, came with him to England on his translation to the See of Canterbury. Whether through Norman's influence, or at their own suggestion, it was decided that the community should join a religious order, and Norman advised the adoption of the Augustinian rule, proposing that two of their number should be sent abroad to learn it, as it was at that time unknown in England. Provided with a letter of recommendation from Archbishop Anselm to the abbot of Mont St. Eloi, Norman and one other went to France, and studied the rule at Chartres and Beauvais. On their return the priory was founded, the actual date being uncertain, but as William Rufus granted to the canons a charter of protection, it must have taken place before that King's death in 1100. Ainulf became the first prior, and in this way was started the first house of Augustinian Canons in England. Its endowment seems to have been small at first, consisting probably of nothing more than such property in Colchester as had belonged to the church of St. Botolph, but Henry I granted to the canons the whole tithes of his demesne at Hatfield Broadoak, and the third part of the mill called Midelmelne under the castle of Colchester, and confirmed to them other grants. By the end of the twelfth century their possessions were considerably increased, as recited in a charter of Richard I, dated 4 December 1189, and in the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV, 1291, the yearly income from temporalities is set down at £42 16s. 5½d., with spiritualities amounting to £10 15s. 4d.



The most interesting record of the early years of the priory is the bull of Pope Paschal II, dated August 1116, which in recognition of the fact that this was the first house of Augustinian Canons to be founded in England grants a long series of privileges. St. Botolph's was to have authority over all other houses of the order in England, to correct abuses and inflict punishments, to prescribe regulations and to appoint agents to see that their authority was maintained. The priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate (founded in 1108 with Norman as its first prior), was to be subject to them, and no person, ecclesiastical or lay, was to have any authority over them, as they were under the protection of the Roman church only. They had the right to elect their own priors and to present them to the Bishop of London for consecration, which was to be freely granted. In cases where difficulties were made over this, they could go to any other bishop they pleased. As a matter of fact, the house never attained to the pre-eminence among the English houses of Augustinian Canons which the bull assigned to it, but remained one of the smaller and poorer foundations.

The original number of inmates was, as commonly occurs, thirteen, this number typifying Christ and the Apostles. In 1281 the prior and convent in return for benefactions by Master Simon de Eylondia, bound themselves to maintain one additional canon. It is possible that the numbers never rose beyond this, and in 1421 Pope Martin V granted a relaxation of penance to penitents who on the feast of St. Denis should visit and give alms for the conservation and repair of the priory, which was founded and sufficiently endowed for a prior and twelve canons but had been impoverished.

In 1534 the convent, consisting only of a prior and seven canons, took the oath of fealty under the Act of Succession, and the revenue of the house being under £200, it was dissolved in 1536. Its whole yearly value was given at £134 3s. 4d. The history of the priory seems to have been uneventful: at least, no record of importance has been preserved, and certain disputes with the priory of Hatfield Broadoak and the Abbey of St. John, Colchester, are the chief matters on which documentary evidence is extant.

The list of priors, as far as it has been ascertained, is as follows (see the "Victoria County History" for Essex):

Ainulf, first prior, occurs 1116.

John, occurs 1145.

Henry, occurs 1205-1206.

Robert, occurs 1222.

Hasculph, occurs 1224-1240.  
 John, occurs 1246-1259.  
 Simon, occurs 1281.  
 Richard, occurs 1290-1295.  
 John de Colum.  
 Richard le Brom, occurs 1323.  
 John, occurs 1326-1338.  
 Thomas Sakkot, died 1361.  
 John, occurs 1363-1364.  
 John Neyland, occurs 1374, resigned 1391.  
 John Okham, 1391-1393.  
 William Westbrome, 1393, occurs 1412.  
 William Colchester, occurs 1416.  
 John Depyng, occurs 1424, resigned 1434.  
 John, occurs 1437.  
 Thomas Colman, occurs 1450.  
 John Wardhous, occurs 1457.  
 John Flyngaunt, occurs 1462.  
 John Stampe, occurs 1497.  
 William, occurs 1514.  
 William Gooche, died 1527.  
 Thomas Turner, 1527-1536.

With regard to the dedication of the priory, usually given as St. Julian and St. Botolph, it is interesting to note that in the twelfth-century Hedingham roll it appears as St. Botolph, St. Julian, and St. Denis. The Crowland Chronicle records that Pope Paschal II granted a great Pardon, *i.e.*, powers of absolution, to the priory on the feast of St. Denis and the octave following. These days mark the beginning and end of St. Denis's fair, which was held at Colchester for eight days, and Morant records that "anciently, the Sunday after St. Dennis's day, corruptly called Pardon-Sunday, was accounted the chief day of the fair."

This suggests a connection between the priory's Pardon and the fair, which began near by in Queen Street. The cattle fair was held in "Berye-field," now the meadow of East Hill House, not far to the north of the priory church, till the owner bought off the right to hold it there.

After the Suppression the priory and its possessions were granted on 26 May 1536 to Sir Thomas Audeley, Lord Chancellor. The parishioners, however, retained possession of the church, or at any rate of as much of it as before the Suppression was parochial, and this they continue to hold at the present day. The rest of the priory site was granted by Sir Thomas

Audeley in September 1540 to John Golder. In 1548 Arthur Clarke bought it from Anastasia Golder, and Thomas, Earl of Dorset, died possessed of it in 1608. About 1650 it was acquired by Oliver Hendricx, and fifty years later Oliver Burkin became its owner. Matthew Martin bought it in 1720, afterwards giving it to his son-in-law, Major-General John Price. In Morant's time the owner was a Mrs. Selly.

## THE PRIORY BUILDINGS

WITH the exception of the nave of the church, the Priory buildings have been utterly destroyed, so that nothing of them now remains above ground, nor is it possible at the present time to excavate any part of their site, or to discover whether the bases of any walls yet exist. In Morant's time, that is to say, the middle of the eighteenth century, some walls of the claustral buildings seem to have been standing, and formed part of a brew house, but no drawings have come down to us from which any definite idea of their appearance can be gained. It is probable that great part of them was destroyed soon after the Suppression, but the church, being parochial as well as conventual, would have been preserved for this reason, or at any rate such part of it as was used by the parishioners. This would in normal cases be the nave, though there are exceptions to the rule. Anything not needed for parochial use, "deemed superfluous" as contemporary surveys have it, would be likely to be pulled down for the sake of the building materials, and it is not clear how much survived till the siege of 1648.

The following are examples of churches of Augustinian Canons the naves of which were parochial and were the only parts which survived the Suppression: Bolton and Bridlington, Yorkshire; Lanercost, Cumberland; St. Germans, Cornwall; Thurgarton and Worksop, Nottinghamshire; Waltham, Essex. "Till our unhappy civil wars," says Morant, "this church was looked upon as the chief in the town: where the Corporation resorted in their Formalities on Sundays and other public Occasions to hear the General Preacher. And the great Bell there, was that which was rung every morning and evening at four and eight o'clock. In the time of the Siege, this church suffered with most of our public edifices; being partly battered down as some say by the Royalists for fear the enemy should lodge themselves in it; or as others affirm, it was done on design by the enemy, who had a Battery levell'd that way, which last seems probable, because the South east corner is the most demolished."

The fact of the church having been the "chief in the town"

up to the time of its destruction suggests that it was well preserved, and Grose says that it was "entire" until the siege. After 1648 it was left in ruins, totally uncared for. In a description published in the "Universal Magazine" for December 1786 (p. 281) the church is said to have suffered repeated depredations from time to time, and to have been much defaced. "At length however the parish officers to prevent its total demolition, took the laudable resolution of enclosing and locking it up. This has permitted the weeds and shrubs to sprout up among the mouldering walls and scattered tombs; a circumstance which adds greatly to the beauty and solemnity of the scene."

The north-west tower, of which only the base now exists, was standing, according to Morant, within the memory of man, that is to say, about the beginning of the eighteenth century. The engraving in his "History of Essex" (published 1768) shows the north wall of this tower standing to a height of some fifteen feet, with a small semicircular headed window in it.

The nave was used for burials in the eighteenth and great part of the nineteenth centuries, and the ground level gradually rose, until it reached some three feet above the nave floor. On the south side of the church the site of the cloister was also levelled up to about the same extent and laid out as a garden between the new parish church and the priory church, the cloister walks being buried about four feet deep. Various small repairs were carried out from time to time, but not enough to keep pace with the gradual decay of the masonry from exposure and growth of ivy and other plants, and eventually in 1912 a trust was formed by the parochial authorities for the purpose of placing the ruins of the priory under the guardianship of the Commissioners of Works. Between 1912 and 1915 the whole building was made weather-proof and its walls strengthened by grouting, the ivy and overgrowth taken away, and the ground levelled down where this was possible.

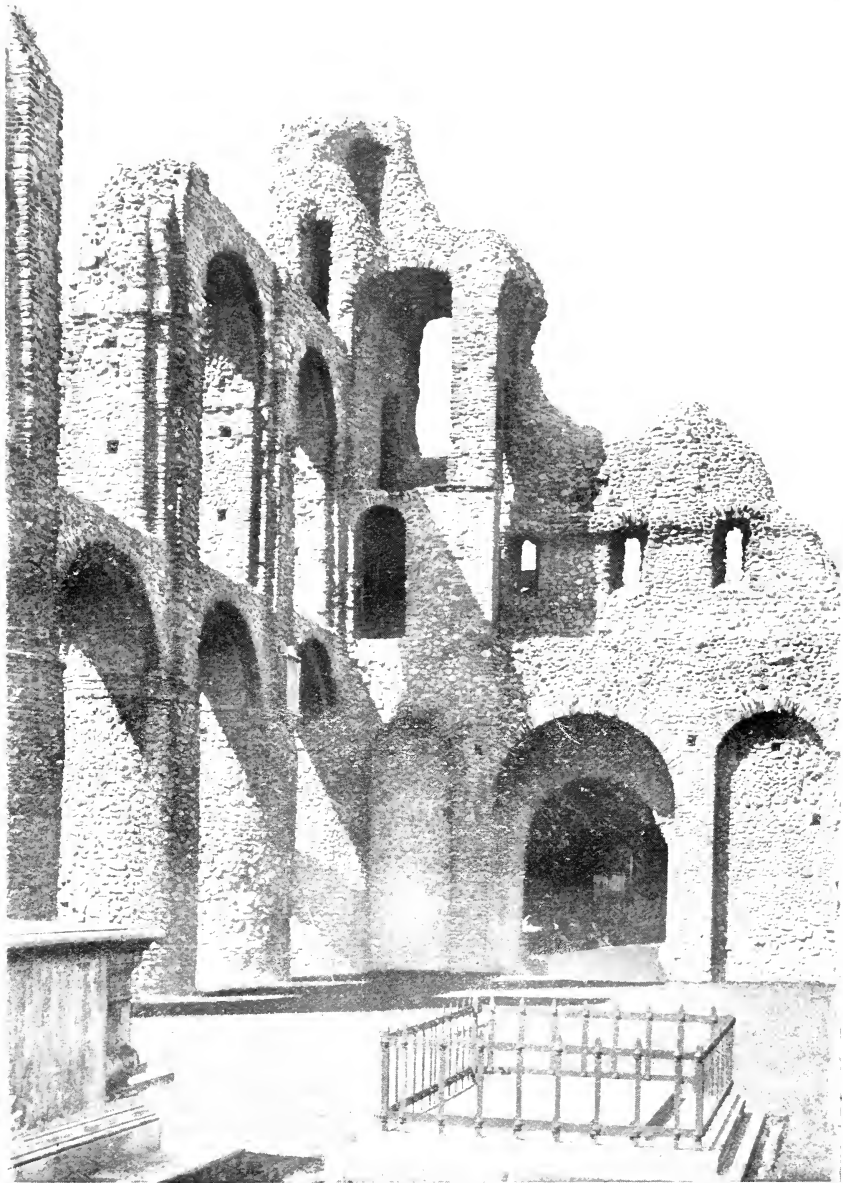
The plan of the original church must for the present, except in regard to the nave, be a matter of conjecture. It may be supposed to have been begun about the end of the eleventh century, and as St. Botolph's was not a rich foundation was probably carried on slowly. No date of consecration, marking the completion of the church, is recorded, but the detail of the west front shows that the twelfth century was far advanced before the building was finished. The seven western bays of the nave remain, and the wall of the north aisle of an eighth bay; and there may have been another bay to the east. The present internal length is 108 ft., so that the total length may

have been as much as 125 ft. The width of the main span is 26 ft. 9 in., and of the aisles 10 ft. and 9 ft. 6 in. respectively, the total width within the walls being 55 ft. 6 in. It is interesting to compare with these dimensions the plan of the nave of Holy Trinity Priory Church, Aldgate, as the close connection between the two houses makes it possible that the Aldgate plan owed something to St. Botolph's. The church itself has long been destroyed, but its plan is fortunately preserved to us in a Survey of c. 1592 by John Symons, now among the MSS. at Hatfield House, and reproduced in the "Home Counties Magazine," vol. ii, p. 46. The priory was founded in 1108 by Queen Maud, wife of King Henry I, and Norman, to whose influence the foundation of St. Botolph's was due, became its first prior. The church was not finished at Queen Maud's death in 1118, and was damaged by fire in 1132. No date of its actual completion is recorded, but a Lady Chapel was added to it between 1187 and 1221.

Its total internal length was about 245 ft., of which the eastern arm of five bays, with the eastern chapels, took up 100 ft., and the nave of seven bays about 105 ft. The internal width over nave and aisles was about 70 ft. and 120 ft. across the transepts.

The walls of St. Botolph's are built of flints and septaria, and all arches, quoins and dressings of red brick, with a very sparing use of stone. Much, if not all, of the brick is of Roman manufacture, as remains of Roman mortar are to be seen on it, showing that it was taken from Roman buildings. With such materials the details are necessarily very simple, but the present appearance of the ruins gives little idea of the original effect, as the whole of the masonry was formerly covered with plaster, which in the interior of the building, and possibly to a less extent on the exterior also, would have been decorated with painted designs in various colours. Some idea of the form which this decoration probably took may be obtained from the eastern part of the nave of St. Alban's Cathedral, which is built of flint and bricks taken from the ruins of the Roman Verulamium, and covered with plaster on which a good deal of the twelfth century painted decoration remains. The motive is an imitation of squared stonework, intended to give the impression that the walls are faced with ashlar, as they doubtless would have been, both there and at Colchester, if stone had been available.

The nave piers are circular, 5 ft. 8 in. in diameter, and it is to be noted that in the bays where the masonry is less damaged than elsewhere they are banded with triple courses of brick at intervals; this is meant to give a good bond to the



SOUTH ARCADE AND WEST END OF NAVE, FROM THE EAST





masonry, and is not done for appearance sake, as it would have been hidden by the plaster. The arches are semicircular of two plain rings of brick, and the capitals are defined by simple projecting courses of brick, which served as a core for the plaster in which such detail as they may have had was executed. From above the capitals shallow pilasters run up to the wall tops, marking the divisions of the bays and the position of the tie-beams of the roof. The triforium is only 2 ft. 7 in. less in height than the main arcades, and its openings are of two plain orders with imposts of two projecting courses of brick. The openings were not subdivided in any way. Of the clearstory nothing can be said, as nothing is left of it but the entrance to its wall passage at the south-west angle of the nave, and there is no evidence as to the pitch of the original roof.

The three western bays of the main arcade and triforium remain on the south side of the nave; on the north side the western bay is missing, but the next six bays of the main arcade and triforium remain: in three of the bays, however, the arches of the main arcade have been cut away, so that only the triforium arches now span the openings between the piers. The piers themselves in several cases have been robbed of their original masonry, and during the recent repairs it was found that behind the facing which had been added in modern times to restore their outline there were hollows nearly two feet deep in some cases, partly void and partly filled with dry rubbish, so that practically half the substance of the pier at these points had been cut away, and only the excellence of the twelfth-century mortar had kept the masonry above from collapsing. The spacing of the nave bays is fairly regular, averaging 8 ft. 6 in. between the piers; but the two western bays are a foot narrower. It is possible that the thickening of the west wall, to give space for the wall-passage at triforium level, was an afterthought, obtained at the expense of these bays. It is worth noting that during the repair of the third bay from the west in the north arcade a hole 6 in. square and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep was found, sunk vertically in the masonry over the east spandrel of the main arcade, at the level of the triforium floor. It seems to be contemporary with the building, and was cleaned out and covered with a tile to protect it from the weather.

The aisles of the nave had single semicircular headed windows in each bay, two of which remain in the north aisle and one in the south, all in a fragmentary state, that at the east end of the north aisle being the best preserved. The window-opening was 2 ft. 3 in. wide by 5 ft. 9 in. high. The aisles

had quadripartite groined vaults of plastered rubble, with semi-circular transverse arches of a single square order in plastered brickwork, but all have fallen except a section at the east end of the north aisle and a transverse arch in the west bay of the south aisle. The transverse arches spring directly from the capitals of the nave piers, but there are pilaster responds of two orders on the aisle walls, the transverse arches springing from the first order and the groins of the vault from the second. In the north aisle there is a doorway in the fourth bay from the west, of two orders with detached shafts in the outer order: the inner arch is semicircular of plain red brick, but the outer order with its capitals and part of the shafts has been destroyed. Over the doorway is a small window of original work, but except here, and in the eastern remaining bay of this aisle, two-light windows have been inserted in each bay, one late in the thirteenth century, and the others about 1340. Only one of these windows, that in the third bay from the east, retains its tracery, though the jambs and arched heads of the windows in the adjoining bays east and west have survived. West of the doorway the fourteenth-century window arches have fallen, but patches of original plaster with remains of colour decoration remain on the splayed jambs, and have been protected from the weather. There are other remains of wall painting in this aisle; part of an arcade of late date is to be seen below the window sill in the third bay from the east. The exterior of the nave, to judge from the remains of the north aisle, was very simply treated, the ornament being reserved for the west front, which was flanked by towers on the north and south, and even in its ruined state is a fine and impressive composition. There are three doorways, set centrally with the nave and aisles; the northern of the three, together with the west end of the north aisle, is ruined almost to the ground level, but the others are nearly complete. The middle doorway, wider and higher than the others, is of five orders, the outer order having a plain roll moulding and the four others a double line of chevron ornament; all these details are worked in a good limestone and are very well preserved, the individual stones being small and used with great economy for the ornamental detail only, the plain surfaces of each order above the ornament being built in brick, originally, of course, plastered. The inner order has pairs of half-shafts of which little more than the bases are left, the next three orders having detached stone shafts with richly carved cushion capitals and square-edged abaci chamfered beneath. The outer order has single half-shafts like those of the inner order. The southern doorway is of four

plain brick orders, but has had jamb-shafts and capitals like those in the middle doorway. The wall surfaces between the doorways are treated with single shallow arched panels, and above the doorways two tiers of interlacing semicircular arches of Roman brick ran across the front continuously between the flanking towers. The head of the middle doorway breaks into the lower tier of arches, being included under a gabled weathering of brick, against which the sills of the arcade are stepped. In the upper arcade the central compartment, and the second on either side of it, are pierced with small windows which lighted the gallery by which the triforium passage was returned across the west end of the nave, and there is a large window, lighting the triforium of the south aisle, over the south doorway, a feature which was doubtless repeated over the north doorway.

Immediately above the upper arcade ran a roll-moulded stone string course, which mitred with the label of a large circular window in the middle of the front. This window had an outer order of chevron ornament, and several stones of its inner order remain, showing the rebate for the wooden frame which held the glazing; such evidence as is left suggests that the window was not filled with wheel tracery in stone, but had its glass secured by iron stanchions and cross bars, like the window in the south-east transept of Canterbury Cathedral.

On either side of the round window was a tall single light with engaged shafts in the outer order, and chevron ornament on the arch: the inner order had a plain angle roll in head and jambs. These three windows lighted the west end of the nave, and the clearstory passage was returned, at a considerably lower level than on the north and south sides, below their sills.

The wall surface of this stage of the front is broken over the position of the south doorway by three tiers of small arched recesses, two in the lowest tier, three in the middle tier, and two in the uppermost, these last being of such low proportions as to be nearly circular. There is also at this level a small opening which gives light to the stair which led from the clear-story level to the nave roof. A brick string course marks the top of the stage, and above this only a small piece of walling is left, enough to show that a continuous arcade of shallow semicircular headed recesses ran across the front at the base of the west gable of the nave. Of the treatment of this gable no evidence survives.

Very little can be said of the design of the flanking towers. Each had a stair leading to the triforium gallery in the western

angle next to the aisles, and their lowest stages had groined vaults like those of the aisles. The interlacing arcades which form the chief ornament of the west front do not seem to have been continued round the towers, and it is probable that such ornament as they had was reserved for their upper stages. One or other of them may have contained the great bell of which Morant speaks, unless the central tower of the church survived the Suppression. The details of the west front, as being the last part of the church to be finished, point to the fact that the church cannot have been completed till about 1160-70.

Nothing can be said of the internal arrangements of the church. The base of a wall crossing the south aisle remains opposite the fifth pier from the west of the south arcade, showing the existence of a chapel at this point. Some pieces of a pavement of mediaeval glazed tiles also remain in this aisle, some of the pattern tiles having the chevrons of Clare, a lion, or a geometrical design. The tiles are irregularly set, and probably not in their original position. In the north aisle some plain red tiles of later date remain.

In the eastern pier of the north arcade, on the side towards the aisle, is a small recess for an image, or possibly for a light.

The cloister was on the south side of the church, and the greater part of its north walk has been uncovered, with remains of a stone bench along the wall of the church, and the foundation of the inner wall which carried the arcade or windows opening to the cloister garth. A few glazed tiles remain on the floor at the north-west angle, where the western range of the claustral buildings joined the church. In normal cases there were doorways from the church in the east and west bays of the cloister walk, but here there was no door in the west bay; its place seems to have been supplied by a doorway, of which some slight evidence exists, in the north end of the western range. At St. Albans and Worcester a similar arrangement exists. The east bay of the cloister is entirely ruined, and its site now under cultivation, so that nothing can be said of the doorway in this bay. The fourteenth-century niche in the west bay was probably meant to hold a light.





The rest of the buildings round the cloister have perished, but their arrangement was no doubt on the customary plan, with chapter-house, parlour, and dormer to the east, frater and kitchen to the south, and cellarer's buildings to the west. The modern church of St. Botolph covers the southern part of their site.

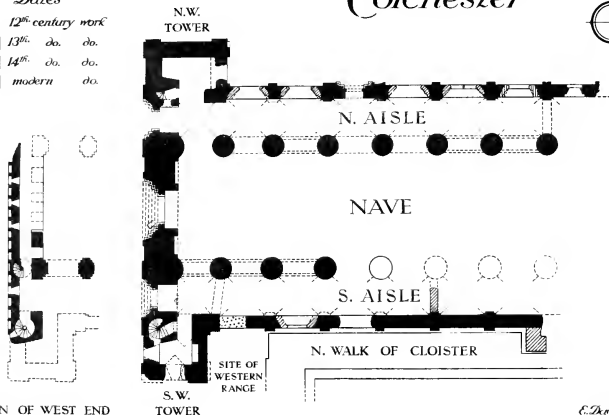
1314  
1771-1772

# ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY

Colchester


*Dates*

	12 <sup>th</sup> century work	
	13 <sup>th</sup> do.	do.
	14 <sup>th</sup> do.	do.
	modern	do.



PLAN OF WEST END  
AT TRIFORIUM LEVEL

*E. Dore Brown  
mens et del. 1916*

Scale of  Feet









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